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Greater Knowledge in Russia May Defeat Power of Reds

Director of the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency, Believes that by Educating the People, the Russian Regime May Sponsor a Threat to Its Own Existence, and May Lead to Undermining the Doctrines of Marx and Lenin.

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Scientific and technical education in the Soviet Union today presents a challenge to the free world. But mass education in the Soviet Union may well become a threat to their own Communist system of government.

The Soviets have two educational goals: first, to condition the Soviet people to be proper believers in Marxism-Leninism and to do the bidding of their rulers; second, to turn out the necessary trained technicians to build the military and industrial might of the U. S. S. R.

In the field of science, the Soviets have made rapid progress and their accomplishments here should not be minimized—least of all by those of us who are directly concerned with our national security.

The Soviet education system in the sciences and engineering now bears close comparison with ours, both in quality of training and in numbers of persons trained to a high level. At the university graduate level, we find that the entrance examinations for scientific work at the top institutions are about as tough as those required by our own institutions. Also, we have the evidence obtained from defectors, some of them recent who were university graduates. Although these men have come over to us because of their detestation of the Soviet system, many of them still pay tribute to the technical quality of their education and appear to look back at least on this part of their lives with some pride.

As regards Soviet scientific manpower as a whole, the quality differs greatly from field to field. But, generally speaking, their top men appear to be the equal of the top men in the West, though they have fewer of them, level for level. True, their biology has been warped by Soviet ideology, most conspicuously by heresies in the field of genetics, such as the doctrine that acquired characteristics are inherited. Also, their agricultural sciences have been backward, plagued like all of Soviet agriculture by the follies of the collective system. What farmer will go out into the middle of a cold Russian night to see what ails a state-owned cow?

In the physical sciences, there is little evidence of such political interference. Soviet mathematics and meteorology, for example, appear to be clearly on a par with those of the West, and even ahead in some respects. Military needs dominate their research programs. We who are in intelligence work have learned by now that it is rarely safe to assume that the Soviets do not have the basic skill, both theoretical and technical, to do in these fields what we can do. In fact, at times we have been surprised at their progress, above all in the aviation, electronic and nuclear fields. Certainly, the Russian's mind, as a mechanism of reason, is in no way inferior to that of any other human being.

In time, with the growth of education—with more knowledge, more training of the mind, given to more people—this Soviet "mar divided" must inevitably come to have more and more doubt about the Communist system as a whole.

In the past, we have sometimes had exaggerated expectations of dissensions within the Soviet and in other totalitarian systems. Our hopes have not perhaps been so

much misguided as they have been premature. If we take a longer look, we can foresee the possibility of great changes in the Soviet system. Here the educational advances will play a major part.

There is already evidence of this. As I have said, the physical sciences are being freed of party-line restraints. Within the educational structure itself, the pressure to turn out good scientists



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and good engineers has caused a de-emphasis of the time spent on ideological subjects. The student engineer, while he still has to pass his courses in Marxism-Leninism, can increasingly afford to do a purely formal job on the ideological front if he is a good engineer.

In the last year, there have been interesting signs of this freedom spreading to other areas, notably to the biological and agricultural sciences. Lysenko is no longer a gospel—I suspect for the very simple reason that his theories proved fallacious when used as the basis for new agricultural programs. The development of corn and of better wheat strains proved remarkably resistant to the teachings of Marx and Lenin—and, in the end, nature won the day. After all, Karl Marx was not much of a farmer. Now Moscow is looking toward Iowa.

So far, this is only a small straw in the wind. But it is a significant one. If freedom to seek truth can spread from the physical to the biological sciences, we can begin to look for signs of independence even in the hallowed sanctum of economics. Certainly, every year that the "decadent" capitalist system continues to avoid depression and to turn out more and more goods, even the most hardened Soviet economist must wonder about the communist version of truth in this field.

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In cultural pursuits, the evidence is not all one-sided. Literature and even music are still subject to denunciation and criticism for not expressing the proper ideals. But clearly, here too, there has been some relaxation in the past two years. Recently, writers once denounced as "bourgeois" and "cosmopolitan" are being permitted to work again.

It is understandable that lasting freedom will come more slowly in economics and the humanities than where scientific matters—more open to proof—are involved. Ideology gives way most rapidly where it collides with fact.

Increased education must inevitably bring in its train increased expectations better material edu-

cation and still keep them from wanting more and from thinking more on lines such as these? I do not think we can easily give the answer in point of time, but one can say with assurance that, in the long run, man's desire for freedom must break any bonds that can be placed around him.

Possibly for a time the Soviets will go forward, using their educational system as a sorting device for human assets. Half-educated men—all fact and no humanity—may still be good fodder for totalitarianism. Possibly the Soviet leaders will encounter problems for which they will seek the solutions by foreign adventures. But there remains the possibility that newly created wants and expectations, stimulated by education and perhaps by more exposure to the West, will in time compel great and almost unpredictable changes in the Soviet system itself.

Once or twice before this present peace-and-coexistence offensive, the Soviet seemed to start toward adjustment of its system to the facts of life in the outside world; first in the latter years of the war, and possibly again in 1946. These starts were quickly followed by a dropping of the Iron Curtain, by repressions, purges and a return to the rigid Stalinist line. Then the Soviet had a dictator, and it's hard to dictate without one. Today they have a committee in which the Soviet people themselves are not clearly told who is boss. Also today, the Soviets have gone much further than before toward introducing into their system the leaven of education, which makes a return to the Dark Ages far more difficult than in the past.

I would not be bold enough to predict that the Soviet might not attempt to return to the rigidity of a Stalinist regime. I do predict that this would be no easy task. In introducing mass education, the troubled Soviet leaders have loosed forces dangerous to themselves. It will be very difficult for them henceforth to close off their own people from access to the realities of the outside world.

A hard choice faces the perplexed, and probably unharmonious group of men in the Kremlin. They lead a people who surely will come to realize the inevitability of the great precept: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

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